

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

June 17, 2004

The Honorable Tom Ridge  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Ridge:

We are writing to express our deep concern about the pending expiration of the federal Assault Weapons Ban on September 13, 2004, and the significant threat to our homeland security that could result from the loss of this vital public safety law. We ask that you work to ensure that the ban is reauthorized as soon as possible.

As you know, the Assault Weapons Ban, enacted in 1994, prohibits the domestic manufacture and sale of certain military-style semi-automatic assault weapons such as AK-47s and UZIs, as well as high-capacity ammunition clips that hold more than ten rounds. As a member of the United States House of Representatives, your support of the ban was instrumental to passing the bill. We also appreciate, as Governor of Pennsylvania, your pledge to enact a "tough, comprehensive crime bill ... (to) include the ban of assault weapons identified by police, sheriffs, and district attorneys."

We share your support for law enforcement and the need for common sense public safety measures, such as the federal Assault Weapons Ban. In light of efforts by terrorists to obtain these deadly weapons in the U.S., renewing the federal Assault Weapons Ban is even more important today.

As you know, a terrorist training manual found in Kabul, entitled "How Do I Train Myself for Jihad," urges terrorists to obtain assault weapons, "preferably AK-47 or variations," in the United States. There is overwhelming evidence that terrorists are following that advice and trying to get assault weapons in the U.S. including:

- A Michigan resident convicted of weapons violations and a conspiracy to ship weapons to Hezbollah in Lebanon.
- An illegal immigrant, suspected of having ties to Al-Qaeda, shopping for firearms and ammunition at gun shows. He eventually pleaded guilty in Texas to immigration charges and illegal possession of ammunition.

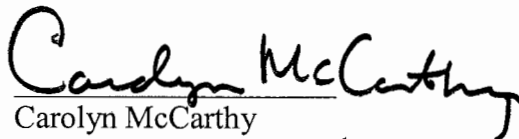
The terrorist effort to obtain assault weapons is one of the reasons why every major law enforcement organization in the country supports renewing the assault weapons ban including the Fraternal Order of Police, Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association, International Association of Chiefs of Police, International Brotherhood of Police Officers, Major Cities Chiefs, and the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives.

The Assault Weapons Ban plays a critical part in protecting the nation's security and we urge your support, as Secretary of Homeland Security, for preserving the ban on deadly, military-style assault weapons and for keeping them out of the hands of terrorists.

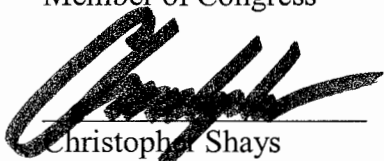
Sincerely,



Michael N. Castle  
Member of Congress



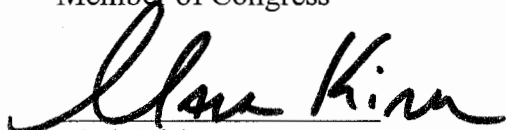
Carolyn McCarthy  
Member of Congress



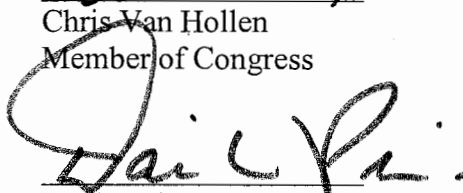
Christopher Shays  
Member of Congress



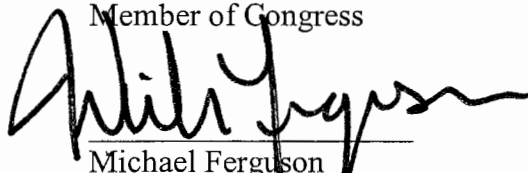
Chris Van Hollen  
Member of Congress



Mark Kirk  
Member of Congress



David Price  
Member of Congress



Michael Ferguson  
Member of Congress



James R. Langevin  
Member of Congress